

Conversation with white female, Russellville, Kentucky (Transcription)

CAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN DIALECTS CASSETTE NO. 34 SIDE B

This next excerpt is taken from original tape W88.

<unintelligible text>

RESPONDENT: ... steaming the flatbeds. (laughs) () yet. (laughs)

QUESTIONER: () steam engine here.

R: Oh, sure enough.

Q: Was that down here by Red Lizard?

R: Mm-hm. Now they, we used to always steam the beds. And then in the later years, it took so many men to, to lift that old (pan), if you know, it's a great big pan, about the size of the (). I believe they did about twelve and a half yards at a time, and, and of course about nine yards wide. And that pan is just awfully heavy, and it takes four mens to lift it.

Q: ().

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R: That's right, and the, it's gotten so that you can't get help. So you just have to do it the best way you can. A, certain little sprays that you can, so now we () it. You can get that, uh-huh, at the hardware store. You get the gas. In cans. You just prepare your bed and put the cover on it.

Q: How do they fix those beds around the ()? Do they hose them?

R: Oh yes, they have to, they, they get this kit, and they's a big plastic cover, and at the edge of the bed, why they pull the dirt up around the cover, you know, to make it air-tight.

Q: Air-tight?

R: And so they put these cans inside, and then after they get it all covered around, they go around the edge and then mash on these cans. And it was, there was about, oh, something that

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will puncture it.

Q: But around the beds, they're not, the beds themselves are not enclosed by anything?

R: No, just the dirt, they pull the dirt up over the, this ...

Q: Then how do they prepare the seed for planting?

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R: Well, they usually mix it in with fertilizer. They prepare the beds, and they just put the fertilizer in, and rake it and all. And then they put some fertilizer and the seed, and then mix them all up together and sow the bed. That was what they did.

Q: They did it by hand?

R: Uh-huh. Sowed the bed by hand. And now some people take some switches and beat the seed in. Others just kind of tromp them in, and some just leave them on top of the ground. They don't have to be ().

Q: They don't? They're so tiny.

R: Yes! Isn't that the truth? They are. And you'd think that they're such a little bunch of seeds, you know, that there wouldn't be enough because of it. But if you don't watch you have too many seeds, and then if you do, why the plants are small.

Q: (inaudible)

R: Uh-huh, yes.

Q: They don't sprinkle the seeds with water or anything, do they?

R: No, they never. I never, I've never heard of anyone putting them in water. I guess ...

Q: And then they're going to sprout by themselves.

R: Yeah, yeah. We always like to have a little rain on them, you know. (laughs) After they're in, sometimes when they, when it is dry, you do have to water the beds. To give them enough moisture. (). Always to prepare the bed in the fall of the year it seems to be better than to wait until spring. And there's more moisture there. And we find that it's, it really pays to do it in the fall of the year.

Q: Oh, uh-huh.

R: Uh-huh, so there will be more moisture. And always when we do it in the fall of the year, we never have to water the beds. But if you do it in the spring of the year, it seems like there's not enough moisture, and sometimes when it is dry, why you do have to water your beds. Yup, one bed! (laughs).

Q: Now, how do they prepare the fields over there.

R: Well, they will plow the field and disc it. Always disc it several times, and get it pulverized, just real good. And some people spread the fertilizer on the ground before they plow. And some wait until after they plow, and then mix the fertilizer you know on the ground. And then disc it. Get it in real good condition before they set the tobacco up. Some people use setters for the tobacco, and some set it behind.

Q: Oh, do they?

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R: Uh-huh. Now of course, it's according to the seed. A lot of times, most people like to set them. And of course it's much easier. With the seven(?). But now if the plants, if it stays wet and the plants are about to get away, why some people will set by hand, you know, to take care of the plants. So they won't,

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some people cut the plants off. We never liked to do that.

Q: Cut them off?

R: Uh-huh. Cut them off and let them come out again. But they did.

Q: In the beds?

R: Uh-huh, in the beds. Uh-huh, they began to get to, if it's stays wet, and you can't set with the setter, see, when it's wet you can't get in the field with the setter. And a lot of people don't like to do it by hand, so they have to cut them off and let them come out again. But we never did that, we always were lucky enough to get enough hands together to go on and ...

Q: Get the ().

R: Uh-huh, go on and put it in the field.

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Q: And those little plants are getting up to a certain size there in the () bed--how do they refer to that size?

R: How do they refer to it?

Q: To the size.

R: All about a quarter, a half a dollar. Have you heard that expression?

Q: Yes, I have, mm-hm.

R: Yeah, they'll begin to talk to () their dollar. (laughs)

Q: It's not four and a half dollars then, is it?

R: No, that's the truth! Almost forgotten, what, what size dollars are. (laugh)

Q: There's another word. Then they, now they've got, we've got the field ready, how are we going to get them out there?

R: You mean to the, well, do you draw them.

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Q: You draw the plants?

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R: Off of the beds. Uh-huh, and then you usually use hampers to put them in.

Q: "Hampers"?

R: Uh-huh. Let's say a bushel hamper...

Q: Yes ...

R: ... you can lay it down on the side, and you pull the plants in it, and keep them straight. And you can lay them down. In the hamper, and that way they come out ...

Q: Straight.

R: ...straight. Uh-huh, you need to keep them straight. You see.

Q: ()quickly.

R: Uh-huh, so you can get them out, and that way, why it's safe. Some people wash the roots of the plant when they come off of the beds. Uh-huh, yes.

Q: What would that be for?

R: Well, to get all of the mud and dirt off, to clear the roots. Some people think that they will do a lot better to have the roots cleaned.

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Q: I never heard that.

R: Mm-hmm. Yes, some wash the roots, and some don't. It's just a matter of opinion. If it, they say if it turns out dry, with all that mud on the roots, why it will keep the plant from going on and growing like it should. You know, to start with.

Q: Oh?

R: If that ball of dirt will dry out. You know, on the thing.

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That it doesn't do as well as it would if it didn't have that dirt, it could just go on and make fresh roots, you know. Go on and grow.

Q: In fresh dirt.

R: Mm-hmm.

Q: So, they draw them out out of the beds ...

R: Uh-huh, and put them in the hamper so then, usually, they have a truck or a wagon to put them on to take them to the fields.

Q: And after that they plant by hand?

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R: Well they do, they draw them, the same way, and take them off to the field. Uh-huh. Usually, when they do it by hand, it's a () case. You know, it will be because the field will be wet and they can't get in. And my husband always uses a string to mark-off his rows to get his rows straight.

Q: Oh yeah?

R: Uh-huh. When he has to set that way, he has always been lucky enough to get enough hands that he can get some strings and measure his rows off, you know, and set them that way.

Q: And then someone goes along with a plant?

R: Uh-huh. Each fellow takes a handful of plants, and goes, and they have the baskets real close together where they can, one handful of plants will go to another basket. They just have them all up and down the row, you know. So they can pick-up a handful of this, a handful of plants will go to the next basket. On that way.

Q: Does someone go ahead of the one that's planting?

R: With the basket? Well now they usually distribute the baskets

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in the field before they start planting. So they'll have the plants pending. You know.

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Q: And then how do they plant them? How do they put them in the field?

R: You mean, they have pegs that they make a hole in the ground, and put the plant in. And then they press the dirt around the peg. And some have cedar pegs that they have whittled-out, and some--you can buy the pegs at the hardware store, which are some kind of a metal--so it's just according to the one that you want to use.

Q: Individuals ...

R: Uh-huh.

Q: And if they plant by the planter, the machine?

R: Now they have someone riding, they'll be two people riding this machine. And so they'll lay the plants on this wheel that goes around. And the wheel will take it on down and drop the water out and the plant, and of course, one will put one plant in one time, and the next person will put the plant in the next time.

Q: Does it make a () stream of water?

R: Yes, it'll click. When it goes down. When the water and the plant drops out, it clicks. And then of course by that time the wheel's up and the next person will drop a plant in, you see, and first one, and then the other, and that way you have plenty of time to get your plant out. One'll do it, and then the other one, you know.

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Q: So they plant by the ()

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R: Uh-huh. Yeah. (laughs)

Q: Must sound pretty. Well, (). What's the first thing, then, that they have to do after they're planted?

R: Well, they usually harrow the hatch out.

Q: Harrowing?

R: Uh-huh. My husband still has a mule and he'll have the colored man to take the mule and harrow it to break the crust, you know. And get the, get it worked-up.

Q: Do they take () the ()?

R: Yes, well now that's, yes, first the metal either with the...

Q: It's between the rows.

R: Uh-huh. Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's right. And then of course, when they get it harrowed, they'll turn around then and plow it, then they poison it. They usually poison right away because the insects are so bad, and they'll ...

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Q: By the way, when they plant, some of those plants don't live,...

R: That's right, they have to re-plant.

Q: Then they have to go back and re-plant.

Q: Mm-hmm. They have to go back and re-plant.

Q: Then they got it harrowed, ().

R: Uh-huh, yes. (laughs)

Q: And then ...

R: And poisoned.

Q: Oh yes.

R: And then they wait about a week, and then they just do it all again. Just over and over.
(laughs) Try to keep the weeds and the grass out.